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Congresswoman Betty McCollum
Statement for the Record
H. Res. 441
September 22, 2009

Ms McCollum: Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution to honor the historical contributions of Catholic sisters in the United States.

In 1727, nine Ursuline Sisters from France arrived in New Orleans to live and work. Since then, Catholic sisters have contributed to the vitality of this country through their dedication to education, health, and social justice. Today the approximately 59,000 Catholic sisters in the U.S. continue to educate our youth, nurse the sick, and serve the most vulnerable in our society.

Catholic sisters have provided a well-rounded education to millions of students across the U.S. They established the nation's largest private school system and founded more than 110 colleges and universities. Attending an all day Catholic kindergarten gave me a strong start in my own education. Later, I attended the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, now St. Catherine's University. It was founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in 1905 and for more than 100 years has educated students of diverse ages and backgrounds in a tradition of the liberal arts and social justice. At St. Catherine's, I had the opportunity to student teach at St. Luke's Catholic School in St. Paul and worked with educators who enriched students' lives through academics and spiritual development.

As the United States expanded westward, Catholic sisters not only built schools but also established hospitals and other charitable organizations. St. Paul is home to Minnesota's first hospital – St. Joseph's. It was founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in 1853 in response to the cholera epidemic afflicting the Minnesota territory. My two children were born at St. Joseph's and to this day this hospital provides quality care to the people of Minnesota's Fourth Congressional District.

It is with gratitude for their commitment and efforts that I rise to thank Catholic sisters for their valuable contributions to our nation.

I yield back the balance of my time.